



## Administrative Office of Courts

ACDD, MIS, Juvenile, & Traffic Divisions

# TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

## Welcome

In this edition, we congratulate the Judges and Clerks for surpassing a major milestone. Also, we focus on AlaFile and E-Appellate and their interaction once fully implemented. A special thanks to one of our divisions. And finally, a friendly reminder of contact numbers that will expedite your requests to AOC.

As always, if you have any special news or announcements that you would like featured, please email us at [newsletter@alacourt.gov](mailto:newsletter@alacourt.gov).

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**Alabama Judicial Building**  
300 Dexter Avenue  
Montgomery, AL 36104

## Newsletter Spotlight

Welcome

Million Mark

Training Opportunities

AlaFile

E-Appellate

Thank You

Division Info

### Congratulations Judges and Clerks for Surpassing the Million Mark!

The Alabama Judicial System (AJS) eclipsed the one million (1,000,000) case filing mark for FY 2006 (October 1, 2005 – September 30, 2006). Approximately 1,053,017 traffic, criminal and civil cases were filed in FY 2006 in the state courts of Alabama. This represents a 10.49% increase from the number of filings received in FY 2005, a year which had set the previous record for cases filed in a fiscal year.

A bulk of the increase in filings can be attributed to effective and assertive law enforcement measures. Traffic case filings alone increased by 27.57%. "As you are well aware, if you travel the highways of Alabama, the Department of Public Safety and local law enforcement divisions are highly visible and actively enforcing the traffic laws," said Randy Helms, Administrative Director of Courts. Significant growth in other case types includes Child Support (paternity establishment and enforcement of child support payment orders) and Small Claims filings (civil cases where the amount in controversy is less than \$3,000). These filings increased by 5.22% and 6.42% respectively.

Correspondingly, the AJS offset the increase in filings by recording a record number of dispositions in a one year span. The AJS entered 1,019,171 dispositions, a 10.50% increase from the FY 2005.

Additionally, the aforementioned increase in filings and dispositions has resulted in the collection and submission of \$77,474,812 to the state general fund, surpassing previous year's collections.

The increased workload placed on the AJS has been managed by an administrative staff that is 25% below the staff that was employed in 2003. The AJS was forced to lay off over 400 employees in 2003, as a result of a budget shortfall. While some staff has been recalled, the system is still operating at reduced staffing levels. Chief Justice Drayton Nabers, appointed by Governor Bob Riley in 2004 to take over the troubled judicial system with a depleted morale, commented on the FY 2006 year as follows: "The staff and officials of the Alabama Judicial System have done an outstanding job of managing this increase in case filings and have handled each case with thoroughness and professionalism. I commend the Judges, the Circuit Clerks and, most importantly, their staff for this excellent performance. I have encouraged the deployment of technology to assist in processing cases which has improved morale in the system. Alabamians should be proud of the improvements that have been made. I am excited about the use of E-Citation by the Troopers; electronic filing by attorneys; and AlaPay, which is the Internet payment site which allows people to pay court costs and fines 24 hours a day. A competent, enthusiastic staff, coupled with the practical use of technology tools such as these have allowed us to keep pace with the expanding filings."

## November Birthdays

Fred Lilly 11/07

Callie Dietz 11/15

Susan Lee 11/18

Baron Preston 11/24

Courtney Martin 11/26



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Check out <http://training.alacourt.gov> for the latest training opportunities!

[Continued on Page 2](#)



# TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

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## Electronic Filing in Alabama's Judicial System

AlaFile continues to draw the attention of groups around the state. Most recently, Chief Justice Nabers addressed the Alabama Bar Institute for Continuing Legal Education (ABICLE) and encouraged the attorneys that have not begun using AlaFile to do so.

AlaFile training for all Clerks' offices was completed in September, three months ahead of schedule. Currently, 55 counties are in Phase 1 (motions and orders) and 49 counties are in Phase 2 (Phase 1 plus complaints, answers, notices of discovery, and subpoenas). The goal now is to have ALL 67 counties through Phase 2 by the end of the year. Plans are being made to pilot Phase 3 in the first quarter of 2007. Phase 3 is the Post Judgment phase such as garnishment and the establishment of the Employer/Garnishee Business Center.

There are over 6,000 trained users in the state, 4,000 of which are registered. Over 25,000 pleadings have been filed and 15,000 orders have been entered.



Chief Justice Drayton Nabers announces the expansion of electronic filing in Alabama's appellate courts. This expansion allows attorneys to file briefs electronically. The electronic filing system in the appellate courts ("E-Appellate") has been tested in the Alabama Judicial System under a pilot project. In the pilot project, E-Appellate has been an application that allows the trial courts to communicate with and upload court documents to the appellate courts through a secure, internet connection. For attorneys, the application serves as a central location to access records essential to the appeal. Now, attorneys will have the capability of filing appellate briefs from their offices with a simple click of a button.

Currently, E-Appellate is available in eight Alabama counties. Russell County, which has participated in the E-Appellate process since its inception in 2004, continues to see outstanding results. Kathy Coulter, Circuit Clerk of Russell County said, "The E-Appellate system has proven to be a dynamic tool in the office of the circuit clerk. I am excited that this system will soon be available to every clerk's office in our state." Jane Smith, Circuit Clerk of Madison County concurs. "I have seen many changes in the court system over the past 33 years. The E-Appellate program has probably saved more man-hours and money than any other single technology application I have seen."

Alabama is one of only a few states to provide a comprehensive statewide e-filing solution that includes all jurisdictions from Small Claims to appeals to the Supreme Court. The state-of-the-art solutions to traditional paper filing are fundamentally changing the manner in which the courts operate, enhancing quality and reducing cost to the public. Alabama's electronic filing system in the trial courts ("AlaFile") is currently available in 41 counties. To date more than 2,800 attorneys have registered with AlaFile, over 8,000 documents have been e-filed statewide, and nearly 3,000 orders have been electronically entered by trial court judges. Additionally, over 600 appealed cases have been transmitted to the appellate courts through E-Appellate.

Chief Justice Nabers said, "I am pleased the technology is offering us a secure and efficient method for attorneys and court personnel to share documents. E-Appellate has proven to be a high-quality, time-saving, and efficient process to file appeals. With the addition of e-filing of appellate briefs to the application, the system will continue to improve for attorneys, court personnel and the public. This is one more way the Alabama Judicial System is becoming more efficient and accessible to the citizens it serves. We are already among the leaders nationally, and our goal is to be number one in quality and efficiency through technology".

For more information of electronic filing in the Alabama Judicial System and about the AlaFile and E-Appellate applications, please go to <http://efile.alacourt.gov>



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E-Appellate is the Appellate Courts' version of electronic case management

- E-Appellate began in Montgomery, Madison, Russell & Lee counties
- Recently, E-Appellate was implemented in Shelby and Baldwin Counties, Birmingham is in progress, and Bessemer and Etowah county are scheduled
- These jurisdictions constitute approximately 60% of case filings
- Plans are to have the whole state online by the end of 2007

AlaFile ↔ E-Appellate

- Attorney can use AlaFile to file appellate briefs
- Court Reporters will soon be able to use AlaFile to file their transcripts with the trial clerk

### A Special Thanks to John Hill and the Technology Help Desk

The Administrative Office of Courts received a thank you letter from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the technical support given during the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Training Program. The letter states, "Without [John Hill's] support and that of the Administrative Office of Courts, we might not have been able to offer this important training to the state and local investigators who participated, and a significant opportunity for this district may have been lost."

Due to their technical support, 27 state and local investigators were able to participate in this training making Alabama a safer place for children.

### Help Desk

The help desk is available between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm CT Monday thru Friday. If you need to request service, please visit the website at <http://helpdesk.alacourt.gov>. If you are experiencing internet problem or do not wish to submit a request online, you can reach us toll-free at 1-866-954-9411, then press option 1.

To help service the needs of all callers, please refrain from dialing direct extensions on the helpdesk numbers. By dialing the toll-free customer service number, it betters your chance of reaching as live person as opposed to a voicemail box. When you dial this number, your call is placed in a queue and your call is answered by one of the available agents. This feature ensures that you receive quality customer service as soon as possible.

We appreciate your patience when calling the helpdesk and hope to serve you soon.

### Other Toll-Free Numbers

Alabama Traffic Service Center  
1-866-954-9399

or

Alabama Central Disbursement Division  
1-877-774-9513

